

SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR PROVIDING LOCATION-SPECIFIC SERVICES TO USERS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to systems and methods for providing information to a user based, at least in part, upon the location of the user.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RELATED ART

10 Portable computing devices, such as Internet-capable phones, personal digital assistants and laptops, are seemingly becoming more commonplace every day. Although these devices are capable of performing various time-saving functions, they are not without shortcomings. For instance, due to the relatively small size of these devices, input/output components incorporated into these devices also typically are
15 quite small. More specifically, a display screen included in such a device typically is small and, therefore, is not capable of simultaneously displaying a large amount of information. As a result, information oftentimes is provided over multiple screens of data through which a user must navigate.

Users also may experience difficulty when attempting to enter information into
20 portable computing devices. This can be due to a small number of actuators provided by a portable computing device and/or the necessity of a user to make multiple entries so that the user can navigate through the multiple screens of information. Thus, the combination of information being displayed over multiple screens and difficulty in entering information can render the experience of attempting to browse through a
25 relatively large volume of information via a portable computing device less than ideal.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Briefly described, the present invention involves systems and methods for providing information to a user via a communication network. In this regard, embodiments of the invention can include an information system that incorporates one or more of a services system and an input system. Preferably, the services system and/or input system function so that a user can be provided with information, which can be based, at least partially, on the location of the user. In those embodiments adapted for use with portable computing devices, such an information system can enhance the convenience of using portable computing devices.

10 A representative information system includes a location-specific input system that is configured to communicate with a communication network. The location-specific input system also is configured to receive an input from a user, determine a location of the user, and enable information corresponding to the input of the user and the location of the user to be provided to the communication network.

15 Some embodiments of the information system can include a location-specific input system that is configured to receive information via the communication network, determine a location of the user, and prevent information failing to correspond to the location of the user from being provided to the user.

Other embodiments of the information system can incorporate a location-specific services system that is configured to communicate with a communication network. Such a location-specific services system can be configured to receive information from a user via the communication network, determine a location of the user, and provide information which corresponds to the location of the user to the user via the communication network.

Embodiments of the invention also may be construed as providing methods for providing information to a user via a communication network. In this regard, a representative method includes: providing a portable computing device; receiving an input from a user via the portable computing device; automatically determining a location of the user; and enabling information corresponding to the input of the user and the location of the user to be provided to the communication network via the portable computing device.

An alternative method includes: receiving an input from a user; determining a location of the user; and providing information corresponding to the input of the user and the location of the user to the user via the communication network.

Other features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent to one with skill in the art upon examination of the following drawings and detailed description. It is intended that all such features and advantages be included herein within the scope of the present invention, as defined in the appended claims.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention, as defined in the claims, can be better understood with reference to the following drawings. The drawings are not necessarily to scale, emphasis instead being placed on clearly illustrating the principles of the present invention.

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FIG. 1 is a schematic diagram depicting a representative embodiment of the information system of the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a schematic diagram depicting a computer or processor-based device that may be utilized to implement the location-specific input system of FIG. 1.